

Message Text

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15

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 INR-11 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 CAB-09 COME-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 L-03 H-03

DRC-01 /087 W

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O R 231017Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3252

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4136

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, IS

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF TWA FLIGHTS TO AND FROM ISRAEL

1. LOCAL TWA MANAGER, EDWARD FRANKFURT, INFORMED ECONOMIC COUNSELOR THIS MORNING THAT HEHAD JUST RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL FROM ISRAEL DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION(RABIN) WHO SAID HE WAS TRANSMITTING "REQUEST FROM MINISTER OF TRANSPORT YAACOBI TO ALL FOREIGN AIRLINES TO RESUME FLIGHTS TO AND FROM ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY". FRANKFURT HAS COMMUNICATED THIS REQUEST TO TWA HEADQUARTERS AND IS AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS.

2. TWA STOPPED ALL FLIGHTS TO AND FROM ISRAEL ON SUNDAY WHEN CYPRESS FIGHTING BEGAN. WITH CYPRIOT, GREEK AND TURKISH AIR SPACE CLOSED, THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL AIR ROUTES OPEN TO ISRAEL AND CONSEQUENTLY TWA AND ALL OTHER FOREIGN AIRLINES CEASED OPERATIONS. EL AL STOPPED ITS FLIGHTS EAST OF ISRAEL BUT HAS CONTINUEDTO FLY TO EUROPE TAKING A COURSE SOUTH OF CYPRESS. ACCORDING TO TWA, THIS IS NOT RPT NOT AN OFFICIAL ROUTE AND EL AL AIRCRAFT FLY WITHOUT REGULAR RADIO CONTACT UNTIL THEY REACH ITALIAN AIR SPACE.

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3. EARLIER TODAY FRANKFURT CALLED TO REQUEST EMBASSY ASSIS-

TANCE IN COMBATING WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE HARMFUL PROPAGANDA IN ISRAELI PRESS AND TELEVISION AGAINST TWA. HE SAID THAT MINISTER OF TRANSPORT YAACOBI, IN TELEVISION INTERVIEW JULY 21, HAD STRESSED THAT ONLY EL AL WAS FLYING AND IMPLIED THAT OTHER AIRLINES WERE NOT BEING VERY HELPFUL IN PRESENT SITUATION. ISRAELI PRESS COMMENT HAS GONE MUCH FURTHER IN CRITICIZING STOPPAGE BY A FOREIGN AIRLINES. FOR EXAMPLE, HA'ARETZ OF JULY 23 SAID THAT "CANCELLATION OF FLIGHTS BY FOREIGN AIRLINES IS A SERIOUS BREACH OF CONTRACT AND MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MAY CANCEL OPERATING LICENSES OF THESE CARRIERS." A "SENIOR OFFICIAL IN CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION" WAS CITED AS SOURCE.

4. COMMENT: FOLLOWING FIRST DISCUSSION WITH FRANKFURT, ECONOMIC COUNSELOR TELEPHONED ACTING HEAD OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY (ELRON) TO PROTEST PROPAGANDA ATTACKS AGAINST TWA WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE OFFICIAL SUPPORT. HE STATED THAT IN EMBASSY'S VIEW TWA'S DECISION TO DISCONTINUE FLIGHTS WAS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE IN CIRCUMSTANCES AND WE CONSIDER IT MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT TWA SHOULD NOW BE PAINTED IN BAD PUBLIC LIGHT FOR SITUATION BEYOND ITS CONTROL. ELRON RESPONDED THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO OFFICIAL INSPIRATION FOR PRESS CRITICISM BUT WOULD TRANSMIT EMBASSY'S VIEWS TO APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS INCLUDING MINISTER OF TRANSPORT YAACOBI.

5. EMBASSY HAS NOT GONE BACK TO GOI AFTER LEARNING OF YAACOBI'S INSTRUCTIONS TO FOREIGN AIRLINES (SEE ABOVE) WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT RAISE QUESTION WITH ISRAELI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR ME TO USE DURING MY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON AT 1230 JULY 24. URGENT REPLY WILL BE APPRECIATED.
KEATING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, AIR ROUTES, AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS, AIRLINES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TELAV04136
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740198-0806
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740724/aaaaauab.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CANCELLATION OF TWA FLIGHTS TO AND FROM ISRAEL
TAGS: ETRN, IS, CY, TWA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005